

## Working Notes

### **TOWN OF ROCKY HILL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING OF AUGUST 18, 2014**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Nadine Bell called the August 18, 2014 Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT.

Those in attendance: Councilor Guy Drapeau and Councilor Bill MacDonald. Also present: John Mehr (Acting Town Manager/Finance Director), Chief Mike Custer (RHPD), Chief Mike Garrahy (RHFD), Assistant Chief Dave Kromas (RHFD), Chief Joe Grayeb (RHVAA) (Entered at 5:34 p.m.) and Deputy Chief Vivian Grayeb (RHVAA) (Entered at 5:34 p.m.).

#### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES & WORKING NOTES**

**Councilor Bill MacDonald made a motion to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the June 16, 2014 meeting of the Public Safety Committee. The motion was seconded by Chairwoman Nadine Bell and adopted unanimously.**

#### **III. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Councilor Joe Kochanek said that he would like to bring an issue up with regards to the intersection of Pratt Street and Dividend Road. This is the site of continuous accidents, of which there were a few recently. The problem with this intersection is that there is a line of sight issue coming north on Dividend Road where people coming off of Pratt Street are trying to cross over to the other part of Pratt Street in order to get onto Main Street. He has witnessed a few accidents there himself. He referred to the unfortunate situation there is at this intersection. If someone is a responsible citizen, who is looking south onto Dividend Road where no car is coming, and proceeds to cross over the intersection but there is somebody, who is coming north on Dividend Road, who is either exceeding the 30 m.p.h., or they are not paying attention and they hit the back of the car that is crossing that intersection, it then becomes the fault of the person who is in the car that is crossing that intersection. He asked if he was correct. Chief Mike Custer said that he agreed. Councilor Joe Kochanek said that is a foolish way of looking at this but he said that if someone is going through the intersection that has a stop sign that it is their responsibility if someone hits them because they had proceeded through an intersection that had this stop sign. He proposed that they proceed to have a third stop sign put there for the people who are heading north on Dividend Road through that intersection. This is because of the fact that they have had accidents in the past and there probably will be some in the future, as well as there is the line of sight issue there. He said that there doesn't appear to be a problem if people are coming off of Main Street and heading south on Dividend Road. He then referred again to people coming north on Dividend Road and he said that they are liable to putting someone's life in danger if they aren't paying attention, etc. but that other person will be at fault

in turn. He wishes that someone will look into this further so that they can see if they can rectify the situation.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell said she had a question for Chief Mike Custer, but she said that this might be in the realm of the Town Manager as the Chief Public Safety Officer instead and she asked if she was correct with regards to the Town Manager being the Chief Public Safety Officer too. Chief Mike Custer said the Town Manager is the Chief Traffic Authority. Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked Chief Mike Custer in his opinion if it would become problematic where people would think everyone is going to stop at an intersection where there are three stop signs at a four way intersection and if they don't assume that the people who are going south are going to continue on. Chief Mike Custer said that he wouldn't think so in that particular situation. He said that he agrees with Councilor Joe Kochanek about the intersection he was talking about because that is very unusual and bizarre in terms of how the traffic flow there is regulated. Chief Mike Custer said he has always believed that an additional stop sign should have been put and posted there. He said they perhaps could make a recommendation to the Town Manager, as the Traffic Authority, to move ahead in the process for them to have one placed there.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked Councilor Bill MacDonald if he was in agreement with this and he said sure. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said they would refer this to Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr and then he could bring this back to them. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said she thought they all agreed about this.

Councilor Joe Kochanek said thank you. He referred to the type of a situation where people have had signage but they didn't realize that it stated "Yield" or "Stop", etc. He said there was this same type of problem in the Town where he had been this past weekend. He noticed that two years ago they were able to get informational signs there that are solar powered and flashing. These were put up for "Yield" because he said that people were having a problem understanding what that meant. He said that he went to the Police Station there and got a copy of a purchase order from them. He also had a discussion with the "powers to be" there and these signs are evidently sanctioned, as well as preferred, by the Feds, because these do bring the attention to the driver as to what is trying to be conveyed to them as a way of them handling themselves. He handed out some information about this sign for everyone to see. This type of sign costs \$1,600. Chairwoman Nadine Bell told Councilor Joe Kochanek that she thought that he had mentioned that there potentially is some grant money available for this. Councilor Joe Kochanek said there are grants and he understood that the Town he had been in had gotten four of them through the Feds and through a grant after they had indicated that this is what they wanted to put in place of the static signs. Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr if he could show this information to Ray Carpentino (Economic Development Director) so that he can look to see what grant money is available for this potentially.

Chief Mike Custer said those signs are very effective and he has seen them used at crosswalks. Councilor Joe Kochanek said these are used at school crossings and for all kinds of things. Chief Mike Custer said these signs catch people's attentions.

Councilor Joe Kochanek said that was all he had to say. Chairwoman Nadine Bell thanked Councilor Joe Kochanek.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Update – 60 West Street**

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if there were any updates for 60 West Street. Chief Mike Custer said that he had a report for them. There were only two medical calls there for the month of July. Ambulances were called there to transport patients to the hospitals. There were no Police or fire responses for that month.

For the census at 60 West Street, there presently are eighteen patients, who are assigned under corrections parole, and there are thirty-two patients there who are assigned under the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. At this time, there are a total of fifty patients. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said thank you.

**V. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

**A. Fire**

Chief Mike Garrahy said the RHFD had responded to 57 incidents in July and the year-to-date total is 319. They recorded 506 training hours and the year-to-date total is 2,914. They had 118 administrative hours and the year-to-date total is 911. There were no firefighter injuries and the year-to-date total is zero. For staffing, there was one new member and one resignation for a member who had left in order to join a career fire department. There are 68 active members.

For the Fire Marshal's office, there were 20 inspections (construction) and the year-to-date total is 109. There were 11 inspections (building) and the year-to-date total is 152. There were 12 fire alarm and sprinkler tests and the year-to-date total is 39. There were 9 plan reviews and the year-to-date total is 136.

Chief Mike Garrahy said there were no department related illnesses or injuries. One firefighter had successfully completed their State certification courses and four more firefighters are in the exam stage.

Chief Mike Garrahy said they have developed several new SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures). As part of the radio system upgrade, they have had digital capable radio consolettes installed in the Stations.

Chief Mike Garrahy referred to the fire calls and he said that nothing had stood out really, except for an incident that happened on July 3, 2014. A storm had come through at approximately 9:00 p.m. and that storm had produced nine fire calls. Seven of those fire calls were on the corner of Pratt Street and Dividend Road where the high voltage lines fed into the household feeds. Several houses were damaged there.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell said thank you. Chief Mike Garrahy told her that she was very welcome.

**B. Ambulance**

Chief Joe Grayeb said the RHVAA had 111 calls for the month of July and the year-to-date total is 718. Riding time on the ambulances for the members was 1,644 hours. There were 365 administrative hours and they had 267 hours for standing by at various functions (i.e. soccer, summer concerts and movies at Elm Ridge Park, etc.). He said the RHVAA taught some CPR classes to the Town's Highway Department. The RHVAA did some standby coverage in Newington. The total volunteer hours were 2,278. He said the year-to-date between the RHVAA and Aetna for calls is 2,430.

Councilor Guy Drapeau confirmed that it was 2,278 hours and Chief Joe Grayeb said that was for the total number of hours. Councilor Guy Drapeau confirmed that there were 2,430 calls. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said that was with Aetna. Chief Joe Grayeb said this was for the year. Councilor Guy Drapeau asked if there was a split out between Aetna and the RHVAA. Chief Joe Grayeb said that Aetna has done approximately 1,712 during the daytime and the RHVAA has done 718 for the year.

Councilor Guy Drapeau asked Chief Joe Grayeb if they are getting any stipends or if they are charging any fees for their standbys at the various events. Chief Joe Grayeb said no and he said that most of these are related to the Town. They did a couple of coverages in Newington, which has a July 4<sup>th</sup> extravaganza every year. The RHVAA always sends an ambulance there. Newington Volunteer Ambulance also had a member of theirs pass away so the RHVAA sent an ambulance twice to cover the Town while they were at the wake and funeral. He said that the Newington Volunteer Ambulance is great because they always send their ambulances to Rocky Hill if the RHVAA needs them for anything.

Councilor Guy Drapeau referred to the track in Rocky Hill. Chief Joe Grayeb said this is the first year that standby coverage has been asked for at the track. They covered this with two ambulances and a UTV, which they had purchased. The last Town Council had asked them to look into them finding a better way to get people out of the woods. The Town has walking trails and the Quarry, etc. The RHVAA got together with the RHFD to look at all of the different options. This was presented to the last Public Safety Committee that thought this was great but there was no money for this. He said they ended up acquiring a few generous donations. This included the Motocross Track, which donated some money to them. He said they combined all of those donations and put some of their own money in to have a six wheel UTV purchased. They utilize this for some of the park events too. Councilor Guy Drapeau said his neighbor had built this for them so he saw it in his garage. He said this is very nice. Chief Joe Grayeb said the RHFD has been training their members on this and almost all of the RHVAA members are trained on this now so they are just starting to utilize this.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked Chief Joe Grayeb if that was all he had and he said yes. Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked Councilor Bill MacDonald if he had any questions and he said no.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell thanked Chief Joe Grayeb.

**C. Police**

Chief Mike Custer said there were 1,968 calls for service that came through the Dispatch Center in July and 1,662 of these were Police related. There were 44 criminal arrests for the month and there were 48 motor vehicle accidents that were investigated. There were 4 DUI arrests. There were 109 infractions that were issued and 159 warnings. There were 52 Town tickets that were issued also.

Chief Mike Custer referred to the RHPD's staffing. There is still one Police Officer who is on light duty. This is a maternity related situation and the Police Officer's expected due date is September 1, 2014. There is also one vacancy from a retirement. They have a Police Officer candidate who has finished the background check and this candidate is ready to go. The academy date for this candidate will be October 1, 2014. He mentioned that the vacancies will be carried in the interim. There are also two candidates for Police Officers who are in the pipeline and they are going through their background investigations. These will be the replacements for the SROs. It looks like these also will be in the academy class in October.

Chief Mike Custer said the RHPD had some unfortunate news that was staff related. One of their Police dogs died during training and he told everyone that he didn't know if they had heard this. They only had this dog for twenty-one months and this dog was only two and a half years old. He was a fantastic dog. The dog had been participating in some training and was on a break in the back of the Police car. He explained that the RHPD trains jointly with other Towns. He said while the other Towns had been working their dogs that the RHPD's Police Officer went back to get his dog and he found him expired. Chief Mike Custer said there was nothing wrong with the Police car where the air conditioning wasn't working so his personal feeling is that this is a freak thing. The dog hadn't been overworked. There was an autopsy that was performed on the dog this morning at UCONN and they are waiting for the results. This dog was under warranty for two years so there is a good chance that they will get another dog to replace this one seeing they had the dog for less than two years. This dog's name was Rudy and there will probably be some kind of a ceremony for him. He told everyone that he will be sure through Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr to let them know when this will be. Chairwoman Nadine Bell thanked Chief Mike Custer and she said that they are all very sorry to hear about this. Chief Mike Custer said this was all that he had.

Chairwoman Nadine Bell said that Councilor Joe Kochanek had brought up a couple of things that she wanted to share, as well as perhaps ask Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr to look into. Chairwoman Nadine Bell said one of these things had to do with the CVS on Main Street. She said that if someone is in that parking lot and they are taking a right onto Main Street that there is a sidewalk there which is overgrown with some shrubs. People can't be seen until they are right out there in front of someone if they are riding their bikes or if they are walking. She doesn't know if that property owner there could be asked to trim the hedges. This would be so that there is a better line of sight for the cars that come to that stop sign so that they can see to the right in order for there to not be an unfortunate accident there. Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr confirmed which CVS this is. Chairwoman Nadine Bell mentioned again which CVS this is. She said another thing was that there is also a report of many stop signs, etc. in Rocky Hill that have overgrown trees and shrubs around them so that

these can't be seen. She asked people to report line of sight problems so that they can be addressed so that their residents can be kept safe.

## **VI. OTHER**

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked if anyone had anything else to talk about. Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr said there had been a false alarm a couple of weeks ago with one of the panic buttons (at the Town Hall) and this made them realize that the security associated with the building will need to be reviewed. There have been some meetings being held with the RHPD, the RHFD and the Town Staff in order to get some ideas as to how to improve security, especially in a lockdown situation. It looks like the outside doors at the Town Hall don't lock automatically. Residents might be walking into the middle of something even if the Town Hall does go into a lockdown. He said they are in the process of having this worked on right now. He mentioned that they might come back to make some suggestions and they might need some money, depending what the costs are, especially for some of the locks that lock the outside doors. Chairwoman Nadine Bell thanked Acting Town Manager/Finance Director John Mehr and she told him that she is sure that he will keep them posted about this.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairwoman Nadine Bell asked for a motion to adjourn if there were no other issues.

**Councilor Guy Drapeau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:49 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bill MacDonald and adopted unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth  
Recording Secretary  
(Not present at meeting.)